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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS_KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [11. U.S.-Israel Relations](#)
- [12. Democracy in Mideast](#)
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Key stories in the media:

Maariv quoted people who attended Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's meeting with Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz during her visit to Israel as saying that she was particularly assertive. The discussion was over Secretary Rice's demand that Israel approve the

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transfer of trucks and military equipment to the PA, and her insistence on a tight calendar in the matter. The newspaper quoted Israeli defense sources as saying that the conversation was tough, and that the talks that Rice held with PM Sharon and FM Silvan Shalom were difficult as well.

The media continued to report on Sharon's official visit to France. Israel Radio quoted him as saying in an interview broadcast on Thursday on a French TV network that France should pressure the PA to stop the violence, and that Syria has not given up its ambition to control Lebanon, where he said Iranian Revolutionary Guards are training Hizbullah members. Maariv reported that Sharon told a gathering of French Jewish leaders on Thursday that the entire world can see how difficult and painful the disengagement plan is to Israel. He was quoted as saying that the upcoming period will be one of the most difficult that Israel has known.

Ha'aretz reported that Mofaz has thus far rejected a recommendation by senior IDF officers that Israel launch a major offensive in the Gaza Strip shortly before or simultaneously with the disengagement. The newspaper cited Mofaz's belief that all diplomatic avenues to persuade the PA to act against the terrorist groups must be exhausted first, and that the PA has a clear interest in preventing fire. Jerusalem Post quoted a senior officer in the IDF's Southern Command as saying that the army will build three fences and a range of state-of-the-art weapons systems around the Gaza Strip after disengagement in order to foil infiltration by terrorists. Jerusalem Post and Hamodi'a quoted the officer as saying that the cost of the security apparatus would be 1 billion shekels (around USD 220 million).

Yediot and other media reported that the police are planning to impose a closure on southern Israel next week to prevent the influx of protesters to the area of Sderot. Ha'aretz cited the belief of the IDF's Southern Command that the number of right-wing activists who have succeeded in infiltrating the Gaza Strip since its closure on July 13 appears to be between 1,000-1,200, and not 2,000 as announced early in the week.

Israel Radio reported that Ami Ayalon, the co-founder of the Peoples' Voice initiative, will lead a pro-disengagement rally in Jerusalem today.

Yediot reported that Israel has informed the U.S. that it refuses to allow the FBI to question Naor Gilon, head of the political department at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, or other Israelis involved in the affair of Pentagon analyst Larry Franklin. However, the newspaper writes that Israel agrees to provide written answers to all of the investigators' questions. Yediot

reported that the U.S. apparently is not satisfied with Israel's proposal.

Leading media quoted Hizbulah Secretary-General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah as saying Thursday that his organization will not ignite the Israel-Lebanon border during the disengagement.

Jerusalem Post reported that undercover Border Police units shot and killed Islamic Jihad fugitive Muhib Mussa near Tulkarm on Thursday afternoon.

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that on Thursday, the Vatican reacted strongly to Israel's protests over Pope Benedict XVI's failure to condemn the Netanya bombing. The media cited the Vatican's announcement: "The Holy See cannot take lessons or instructions from any other authority on the tone and content of its own statements." The Vatican cited retaliatory actions by Israel following past terrorist attacks.

Jerusalem Post reported that a new Foreign Ministry project hopes to get Jewish and moderate Muslim groups in Europe to cooperate in speaking out against terrorism. Reda Mansour, a veteran Druze diplomat who has served as consul-general in San Francisco and ambassador to Ecuador, heads the new initiative.

Maariv reported that a new border crossing between Israel and Egypt will soon open near Nitzana.

Reporting on developments in the trial of four Arab American members of Islamic Jihad in Tampa, Fla., Ha'aretz cited an agreement that was reached recently between U.S. prosecutors and the defendants' attorneys, according to which most of the Israeli witnesses who were supposed to travel to Tampa this summer will not go.

This week's Maariv/Teleskop poll:

-57 percent of Israelis support the disengagement (54 percent in a poll earlier this month).

-"Were Knesset elections held today, and were the Likud to split into two branches, for whom would you vote?" (in parliamentary mandates): Likud (Sharon branch) - 30; Likud (Netanyahu branch) - 21; Labor + One Nation: 18; Shas - 10; Shinui - 9; National Union - 7; Meretz - 6; United Torah Judaism - 5; National Religious Party - 4; Arab parties - 10.

11. U.S.-Israel Relations:

Summary:

Assistant diplomatic correspondent Ilil Shahar wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "It would appear that the Americans are concerned that their involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will also fail to end in success, as has happened in Iraq."

Deputy Managing Editor and extreme right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The Americans, seeing that Sharon has effectively rendered his own fortunes hostage to Washington's discretion in not making it too clear that no ... guarantees were ever made, can now demand anything of him that they wish."

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Even a banana republic would not sign such an agreement.... [However], even without American pressure, the time has come to introduce order into defense exports from Israel."

Correspondent Dov Kortner wrote in conservative Russian-language Vesty: "The international conference promised by Rice is exactly what Sharon was trying to avoid.... Nobody would call current relations between Israel and the U.S. administration good or even satisfactory."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in Maariv: "Israel is hugely disappointed over Washington's actions in the matter [of Iran's nuclear arming]."

Block Quotes:

I. "Toughness Behind the Smiles: Condoleezza Reprimanded Mofaz"

Assistant diplomatic correspondent Ilil Shahar wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (July 29): "A chill wind is blowing from the direction of Israel's purported closest friend. Sources who participated in the meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice report that she was more adamant than ever. In a meeting with Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz, Rice aggressively asked that Israel authorize the transfer of trucks and vans for the use of the Palestinian security services, as well as other combat support supplies.... Rice then set Mofaz a timetable.... Mofaz once again tried to protest the tight schedule: 'I am the defense minister, I have other things to tend to,' he said. Rice lost her patience: 'I am the Secretary of State and I am telling you that it is important'... Political sources have noted in recent weeks that Rice's visit is not the only sign of a cool attitude on the part of the U.S. Among other things, they mentioned that the Americans are not pleased with the fact that Israel has not succeeded in reaching coordination with the Palestinians on disengagement. It would appear that the Americans are concerned that their involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will also fail to end in success, as has happened in Iraq, and there are also two other unpleasant affairs in the background: the sale of the drone spare parts to China, and the affair of Pentagon mole Larry Franklin."

II. "Awaiting the Cavalry Charge"

Deputy Managing Editor and extreme right-wing columnist Caroline B. Glick wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (July 29): "Sharon has justified his decision to move ahead with the withdrawal and expulsion plan with nonexistent guarantees from President George W. Bush to support the remaining Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank] and to oppose the Palestinian demand to obliterate Israel through the so-called right of return. The Americans, seeing that Sharon has effectively rendered his own fortunes hostage to Washington's discretion in not making it too clear that no such guarantees were ever made, can now demand anything of him that they wish."

III. "A Shallow Strategic Dialogue"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (July 29): "The assumption was that Washington would end the crisis [over Israel's security exports] before the disengagement. Instead, the Americans have presented more stringent demands.... An example of the shallowness of the strategic contacts is the absence of a fundamental discussion between the United States and Israel regarding the U.S. administration's plan to expand the democratic process in the Middle East. This process has scored some success in several places, but at the same time it is also giving free rein to extremist forces, which are liable to endanger pro-Western regimes such as Egypt.... The American side is broadcasting that it has been burned by Israel several times, and this time it has decided to be firm. Because they feel affronted, they are not taking into account the political situation in Israel, and are trying to dictate to the Knesset, in an insulting manner, a timetable for its decisions. An agreement is meant to end a crisis, and not to force a friendly nation to agree to be punished in stages. Even a banana republic would not sign such an agreement. On the other hand, it is clear that the supervision of arms exports from Israel is deficient.... Even without American pressure, the time has come to introduce order into defense exports from Israel."

IV. "Signs of a Crisis"

Correspondent Dov Kontorer wrote in conservative Russian-language Vesty (July 28): "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ... said that right after the disengagement is completed, she would propose calling a new international conference on the Middle East, which would give 'a new impulse to the Middle East peace process.' In case Prime Minister Sharon was hoping to gain time and ease American pressure on Israel, the negative outcome of his plan has become obvious,

[because] the international conference promised by Rice is exactly what Sharon was trying to avoid.... The U.S. encourages Sharon in his every step related to the uprooting of Jewish settlements, but his attempt to disengage from Gaza and all the Gaza-linked problems... is producing energetic protests by Arabs and a subsequent tough reaction from the White House. Nobody would call current relations between Israel and the U.S. administration good or even satisfactory."

IV. "Between Paris and Tehran"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in Maariv (July 29): "Israel assumes that Iran will achieve 50-percent success in the [uranium enrichment] process; the Americans believe that it will encounter many glitches and delays. A propos the Americans: Israel is hugely disappointed over Washington's actions in the matter. 'This is an absolute failure,' say [Israeli] experts about the sterile American effort, the lack of consciousness, the enormous energy wasted in Iraq, as opposed to impotence on the real front, against Bush's 'axis of evil': North Korea and Iran. Europe is currently leading the struggle against Iran's nuclear program. This might be one of the reasons for Sharon's passionate acceptance of the French embrace."

12. Democracy in Mideast:

Summary:

Op-ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "A stream of reformists and liberals is sprouting inside the Arab world.... Thanks to them, the Middle East, and the entire world, too, might look better in the future."

Block Quotes:

"A Salute to Muslims"

Op-ed Page Editor Ben-Dror Yemini wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (July 29): "Now, alongside the justified struggle against terror and the necessary battle to silence the venomous preachers, and before those efforts turn into Islamophobia, one should remember that the most important arena against terror is the Muslim one. It is the scene of a giant battle between reformists, Jew-haters, and the West.... A stream of reformists and liberals is sprouting inside the Arab world. They are fed up with hateful sermons, tyranny, oppression of women, hatred of Jews, and self-delusion. They are expressing themselves in key media outlets.... Those new voices represent hope.... They don't constitute the majority; but neither are they an insignificant minority. Thanks to them, the Middle East, and the entire world, too, might look better in the future. Inshallah."

13. Global Struggle Against Violent Extremism:

Summary:

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Immensely more articulate than Bush and most of Israel's limited advocates, [Blair's] verbal onslaught on terrorism was more pointed and effective than most any heard these past few years."

Block Quotes:

"Tony Blair's Finest Hour"

Editor-in-Chief David Horovitz wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (July 29): "Commendably, for the British government, as Prime Minister Tony Blair made plain this week, terrorism is terrorism is terrorism. It has no justifiable pretexts. It has no legitimacy. And it is no less deplorable and unacceptable in one part of the world than in another.... Most tellingly for us, his ringing declaration that terrorists have no 'justification for killing people in Israel' was bookmarked by the prime ministerial equivalent of 'I know you're not going to like this but I'm going to say it anyway'.... He demolished the diabolical historical revisionism that cites Afghanistan and Iraq as the catalysts for 9/11, noting acidly that 2001's Black September attacks

predated both those instances of Western intervention.... Blair ... evidently will not be moved. Immensely more articulate than Bush and most of Israel's limited advocates, his verbal onslaught on terrorism was more pointed and effective than most any heard these past few years: 'There is no justification for it, period,' he said.... What a ray of hope to witness a British prime minister acknowledge the grim challenge posed by the bombers, and begin to grapple with the process of beating them."

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